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Viewing cable 09QUITO935, Embassies Quito and Bogota Seek to Improve Cross-Border

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO935	2009-11-05 23:27	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/09/1/1355/cable-233422.html>

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0935/01 3092327
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 052327Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0287
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0071
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0103
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC LIMA
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000935

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/05

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [SNAR](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: Embassies Quito and Bogota Seek to Improve Cross-Border Cooperation

REF: QUITO 903; QUITO 887; BOGOTA 3011...

id: 233422
date: 11/5/2009 23:27
refid: 09QUITO935
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 09BOGOTA3011|09QUITO887|09QUITO903
header:
VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0935/01 3092327
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O R 052327Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0287
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC LIMA
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000935

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/05
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [SNAR](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: Embassies Quito and Bogota Seek to Improve Cross-Border Cooperation

REF: QUITO 903; QUITO 887; BOGOTA 3011

CLASSIFIED BY: Heather Hodges, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: An interagency group from Embassy Quito traveled to Bogota on September 24-25 to explore possibilities to improve regional USG coordination as well as opportunities to improve communication and cooperation between the governments of Ecuador and Colombia. The visit yielded a list of potential initiatives, and both embassies are currently developing strategies of engagement and funding sources. The timing for the USG to play a role in facilitating improved relations between Ecuador and Colombia is the best it has been since the breaking of relations in March 2008. This message has been coordinated with Embassy Bogota.
END SUMMARY.

EMBASSIES QUITO AND BOGOTA JOIN EFFORTS

¶2. (SBU) On September 24-25, a delegation from Embassy Quito's Northern Border Working Group ("NBWG") visited Bogota and met with Embassy Bogota counterparts and Government of Colombia (GOC) officials. The goal of the visit was to explore ways to improve security, development, and humanitarian conditions in the border region.

13. (C) The visit was timely as Ecuador and Colombia issued a joint communique on September 24 on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York, establishing 11 points toward normalizing relations between the two countries. Counterparts in the GOC seemed particularly interested in USG support of cross-border communication and cooperation. Embassy Quito cautioned that the Government of Ecuador (GOE) would likely be reluctant to expand a USG role significantly. However, the country teams of both embassies have subsequently worked to generate ideas to foster continued rapprochement between the GOC and GOE.

TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

14. (C) Despite the setback of a provincial criminal court judge issuing an arrest warrant against Colombian Armed Forces Chief Freddy Padilla -- in addition to the warrant previously issued by another judge on the same court against former Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos -- both governments still appear committed to moving the process of normalizing relations forward (Ref A), as reflected in what was reported to be a productive meeting between the Ecuadorian and Colombian foreign ministers on November 3 in Cotacachi, Ecuador. The atmosphere was further improved on November 4 when the judge who had issued the Padilla arrest warrant revoked the warrants against both Padilla and Santos. Therefore, Embassies Quito and Bogota propose moving forward with consultations with the GOE and GOC with the objective of implementing at least a few enhanced cooperation proposals in the short term, while looking for opportunities to implement others thereafter.

JOINT INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IMPROVED RELATIONS

15. (SBU) The Country Teams of Quito and Bogota have prioritized a list of initiatives that were determined to have the most traction with both governments in the short-term, broken into security, development, internally displaced persons/refugees, and public affairs components. The lead section and/or agency is identified after each initiative.

SECURITY COMPONENT:

a) Joint Training: Send military and police officers from the GOE and GOC to the United States, Colombia and/or Ecuador for joint training programs. The goals of joint training are to improve military and police cooperation, and to provide a broad range of bilateral joint training opportunities on canines, ports, jungle training, judicial police, immigration police, etc. (Lead: MILGRP/NAS/ATF)

b) Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (CIED): Provide the GOE CIED technical assistance to address the growing problem of cross-border manufacture, transportation and use of improvised

explosive devices (IEDs). (Lead: ATF/LEGAT/MILGRP/NAS/DEA)

c) Security Briefings: Non-USG experts could provide briefings to GOE on the complexity of the GOC's security concerns and challenges. (Lead: POL/DAO)

d) Trilateral Cooperation: Promote trilateral security cooperation between the GOE, GOC and the Government of Peru (GOP). The GOC and GOE have worked separately and effectively with the GOP on border issues and this success could be constructive to the Colombia-Ecuador relationship. Consider trilateral cooperation with the Government of Mexico. (Lead: POL/DAO/MILGRP)

DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT:

a) Bilateral Indigenous Issue: Increase cooperation in the cross border program between the Colombia and Ecuador USAID missions related to the Awa and Cofan indigenous populations with ancestral lands that span the Colombia-Ecuador border (program implemented by the World Wildlife Federation/Colombia and Wildlife Conservation Society/Ecuador). (Lead: USAID)

b) Local Governance:

-- Strengthening. USAID Ecuador will soon begin a new local governance strengthening program in 30 municipalities, 20 of which will be in the northern border area. Programming will include improving financial management, training municipal level governments, and alternatives to the illegal economy. USAID Bogota has had similar programs in 15 municipalities over the past four years in Narino and Putumayo. (Lead: USAID)

-- Cross-border visits. USAID in both countries could fund

confidence building visits by mayors and other elected officials in the border area (e.g., the mayors of Ipiales and Tumaco and Narino Governor Navarro Wolf with their Ecuadorian counterparts) to take confidence building tours of the other side of the border and to discuss development initiatives. At least one meeting of local officials on the two sides of the border already took place without USG support. The two USAID missions will share experiences and coordinate on these programs. Similar efforts by the Carter Center could be leveraged. (Lead: USAID)

c) Regional Value Chain Strengthening: USAID Ecuador/Colombia will look to collaborate and align programming in key, co-dependent agricultural sectors. (Lead: USAID)

-- USAID Ecuador focuses on key agriculture and horticulture sectors that benefit small producers in the region and aims to increase income. Key sectors include cacao and coffee.

-- USAID Colombia works similarly in identical sectors under Alternative Development programs. Much of the economy of Southern Narino and Southern Putumayo is dependent on Ecuador for access to regional and international markets (e.g., most cacao and artisanal fishing output in Tumaco is exported directly to northern Ecuador.)

-- ACDI/VOCA implements specialty coffee programs for both USAID missions. The two missions will work to increase communication between the two initiatives to better understand how each work strategically in complimentary markets.

d) Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF): Work with USAID counterparts in Washington to conduct an ICAF assessment of Ecuador's northern border region. This could generate justification for future funding requests as well as additional ideas for interagency programming. Embassy Quito has already initiated the process of an ICAF with S/CRS and USAID Washington. (Lead: USAID)

e) CSDI/NBWG Cooperation: Promote technical information sharing on the GOC's National Consolidation Plan, supported by Embassy Bogota's Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), focusing specifically on the role of central and civilian-led government presence, linking security and development programs (quick impact confidence building packages) in pre-selected cities and/or areas along Ecuador's northern border. (Lead: USAID/POL)

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP)/REFUGEES COMPONENT:

a) Colombian Refugees in Ecuador: Promote the two governments' efforts to address the humanitarian situation for Colombian refugees as identified in the joint Colombia-Ecuador 11 point road map released on September 24. Continue support of the recent improvements in refugee policy, protection, and assistance in Ecuador, while ensuring adequate adherence to international conventions, such as observing the exclusion for links to armed conflict. The excellent working relationships UNHCR and IOM maintain with the respective governments also could be leveraged in this effort, as well as conversations in the U.S.-Ecuador Bilateral Dialogue. (Lead: POL/USAID)

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMPONENT:

a) Exchanges: Promote an international visitor program and educational exchanges between the two countries. Establish sister cities exchanges between students and residents in the border area. (Lead: PAS/MILGRP)

LONGER TERM POSSIBILITIES

16. (SBU) Embassies Quito and Bogota will explore the possibility of implementing the following initiatives:

a) Section 1207 Proposal: Consider a 1207 funding proposal for Ecuador focused on improved security capabilities, with emphasis on training police and military officials who operate on the border, improved interagency cooperation (between security forces and Plan Ecuador), and legal reform. (Lead: POL/MILGRP/USAID)

b) Immigration Police: Provide technical assistance to establish legal and operational procedures for deporting individuals illegally present in Ecuador. (Lead: DHS)

c) Strategic Communications: Develop a combined public communications strategy for use along the border area, emphasizing the rule of law and the consequences of engaging in illicit activity. Promote a positive image of cooperation between the GOE and the GOC. (Lead: PAS/MILGRP)

d) Border Immigration Biometric Equipment and Databases: Consider funding biometric equipment and separate database projects in each country. Sharing data between the GOE and the GOC may not be realistic for the foreseeable future. However, even separate databases could be used to identify members of illegal armed groups. (Lead: DEA/LEGAT/ICE)

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Embassies Quito and Bogota recognize that implementing each initiative will require an effective engagement strategy and commitment by each of the governments; this is especially true with the GOE. We welcome Department input on the proposed initiatives and, where appropriate, may seek assistance in pursuing funding for their implementation.

¶8. (U) This cable was co-drafted and cleared by Embassy Bogota.
HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====